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**The conceptualization of the dimensionality of corporate communication management: A systematic literature review**

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# The conceptualization of the dimensionality of corporate communication management: A systematic literature review

## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper seeks to develop a conceptual framework for comprehending and identifying the dimensions of Corporate Communication Management (CCM) over time. To achieve this objective, it synthesizes existing research and reviews the literature on the dimensionality of CCM.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Using a literature search on Web of Science (WoS), a total of 17 articles from 8 referred journals and international conferences published from 2012 to 2022 are systematically reviewed employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework.

**Findings** – It has been found that despite the growing interest in corporate communication management, academic literature on CCM is limited. The results highlight that there is a non-uniformity in terminology within the field and that the most repeated dimensions are media relations, dimensions related to strategy, corporate advertising, public relations, investor relations, employee communication, public affairs, and internal communication. However, an overview of the findings allows for the proposal of an integrative framework for CCM.

**Originality/value** – The paper offers a thorough compilation of publications on the dimensionality of Corporate Communication Management (CCM) and categorizes them based on various attributes. This outcome aims to assist researchers and corporate communication practitioners by elucidating the subject matter through the conceptualization of CCM dimensions. The study underscores the necessity for future research utilizing quantitative or mixed-method approaches to further develop the concepts examined, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the dimensions and applications of CCM.

**Keywords** – Corporate communication management, systematic literature review, PRISMA, content analysis.

**Paper type** – Literature review

## 1. Introduction

Defined as a discipline that focuses on communication within organizations, relating to management, business, and organizational aspects (Argenti *et al.*, 1996), corporate communication entails the strategic dissemination of information by organizations to both internal and external stakeholders with the aim of shaping brand perception (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007). **Additionally, it serves as an integral management function, essential for cultivating and maintaining favorable reputational capital among critical stakeholder groups that ensure the organization's viability (Cornelissen, 2004; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011).**

In the last decade, corporate communication management has become a very important concept inside the marketing and communication discipline (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014). It encompasses not only the process of communicating information but also organizational views and objectives to stakeholders. CCM emerged “through the convergence around fundamental business processes of several traditionally separate functions” (Varey, 1997, p. 68) and it aims to deal with stakeholders and gain their support. Hence, it has been considered as a key component to a successful management strategy and a vital management function in contemporary organizations (Goodman, 2000; Yamauchi, 2001; Mihai, 2017). As a matter of fact, corporate communication has been found to contribute to a company's ability to create and disseminate its strategy (Forman and Argenti, 2005), and previous studies support the positive relationship between CCM and financial performance (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014).

The focus on Corporate Communication Management (CCM) began in the 1970s (Yamauchi, 2001) and gained research attention in the 1990s (Goodman, 1994). Throughout the twentieth century, the field of corporate communication was often categorized as public relations or public affairs (van Riel, 1995). Nevertheless, due to the great challenges of practitioners to deal with a new generation of stakeholders who were more educated and demanding (Dowling, 1990), corporate communication became part of management communication. Consequently, the field of corporate communication became more important for the organizations aiming to gain stakeholders' support (Argenti, 1996; Mohamad *et al.*, 2019). **This has led to an increase in the number of professionals working in the field, as well as the expansion of university courses and professional training programs designed to support their development (Cornelissen, 2004).**

As a result, many scholars began to venture into the corporate communication discipline as well as to give a conceptual perspective on the same (Argenti, 1996). Researchers like Varey (1997) and Goodman (2000) contributed to the empirical study of corporate communication management in the UK and USA, respectively. They both used organizations as units of analysis in their studies and eventually, scholars started to study the antecedents and consequences of corporate communication, along with other related variables (Yamauchi, 2001; Mohamad *et al.*, 2019) such as its financial value. In this sense, until recently, authors struggled to demonstrate the financial value attributed to corporate communications to top management (Mihai, 2017).

The field of corporate communication is characterized by a diversity of definitions, models (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014), approaches, and perspectives (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019), reflecting its dynamic and evolving nature. This diversity has led to the examination of corporate communication from various angles, contributing to the absence of consensus on its specific dimensions. This discrepancy is further evidenced by a recent literature review aimed at investigating the conceptualization and dimensionality of CCM across

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2  
3 various academic journals, revealing the limited development in this area (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019).  
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6 Therefore, while CCM might seem self-evident, it encapsulates multiple dimensions,  
7 extending to various other constructs continually under development. Despite efforts  
8 made by scholars (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019; Yamauchi, 2001) to elucidate certain aspects  
9 for this phenomenon, theoretical ambiguity persists, indicating a need for more consensus  
10 regarding specific facets (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019). Thus, this paper aims to address this  
11 gap by conducting a systematic literature review, shedding light on the field of corporate  
12 communication management (CCM). Through a systematic approach, this review offers  
13 a comprehensive overview of published works, providing an integrative framework for  
14 CCM that allows for an improved understanding of CCM along with corporate  
15 communication strategies.  
16  
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18 This paper approaches the literature analysis with three overarching questions in mind:  
19

20 RQ1. Which are the key CCM dimensions?

21 RQ2. Are some CCM dimensions specifically used depending on the stakeholder  
22 approached?  
23

24 RQ3. How have CCM dimensions been measured?  
25

26 The paper makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by elucidating the  
27 current state of Corporate Communication Management (CCM) field and proposing a  
28 comprehensive and integrative framework for CCM. By providing a detailed analysis of  
29 the different dimensions of corporate communication, the study offers valuable insights  
30 that can aid communication managers and firms in developing more effective  
31 communication strategies, ultimately helping them to achieve their organizational  
32 objectives. Understanding these dimensions is crucial for optimizing communication  
33 practices and enhancing the overall effectiveness of corporate communication efforts.  
34  
35

36 The remainder of the article is meticulously structured to ensure clarity and coherence.  
37 Following the introduction, the next sections present a detailed account of the  
38 methodology employed in the study, including the rationale behind the chosen methods  
39 and the processes undertaken to gather and analyze data. This is followed by a  
40 comprehensive presentation of the results obtained from the systematic review, which  
41 provides a thorough examination of the current research landscape in CCM. The article  
42 then delves into the dimensionality of CCM, offering a nuanced discussion of the various  
43 facets that constitute corporate communication and how they interrelate within the  
44 proposed framework. This section is critical as it lays the groundwork for understanding  
45 how the different dimensions integrate to form a cohesive whole. In conclusion, the article  
46 provides a summary of the significant findings, highlighting the key contributions of the  
47 study to the field of CCM. The discussion also includes an exploration of future research  
48 avenues, suggesting potential directions for further investigation that could build on the  
49 findings of this study. These suggestions aim to inspire subsequent research that can  
50 continue to refine and expand the understanding of CCM, ensuring the ongoing  
51 development of effective communication strategies within corporate settings. Overall, the  
52 paper not only advances theoretical knowledge in the field of Corporate Communication  
53 Management but also offers practical guidance for practitioners, thereby bridging the gap  
54 between theory and practice in this essential area of organizational management.  
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## 2. Methodology for literature review

This study is based on a systematic literature review (SLR). “SLRs provide researchers with state-of-the-art understanding of research findings (e.g. empirical generalizations) from topical domains” (Paul and Menzies, 2023, p. 815). The adapted review process for identifying the dimensions and future avenues in the dimensionality of CCM is categorized into four phases: the first phase includes data identification and article selection, the second one entails the description and classification of literature, the third, the detailed content and citation analysis of articles, and finally, the reporting of findings and research gaps is conducted. In this study, we followed the widely-used PRISMA protocol as shown in Figure 1 (e.g. Hollebeek *et al.*, 2023) which consists of three stages, including identification, screening and inclusion (Page *et al.*, 2021). Besides, a content analysis has been performed. For this, manual coding has been used, this means the researcher read the text and coded manually the dimensions, approaches, and metrics identified.

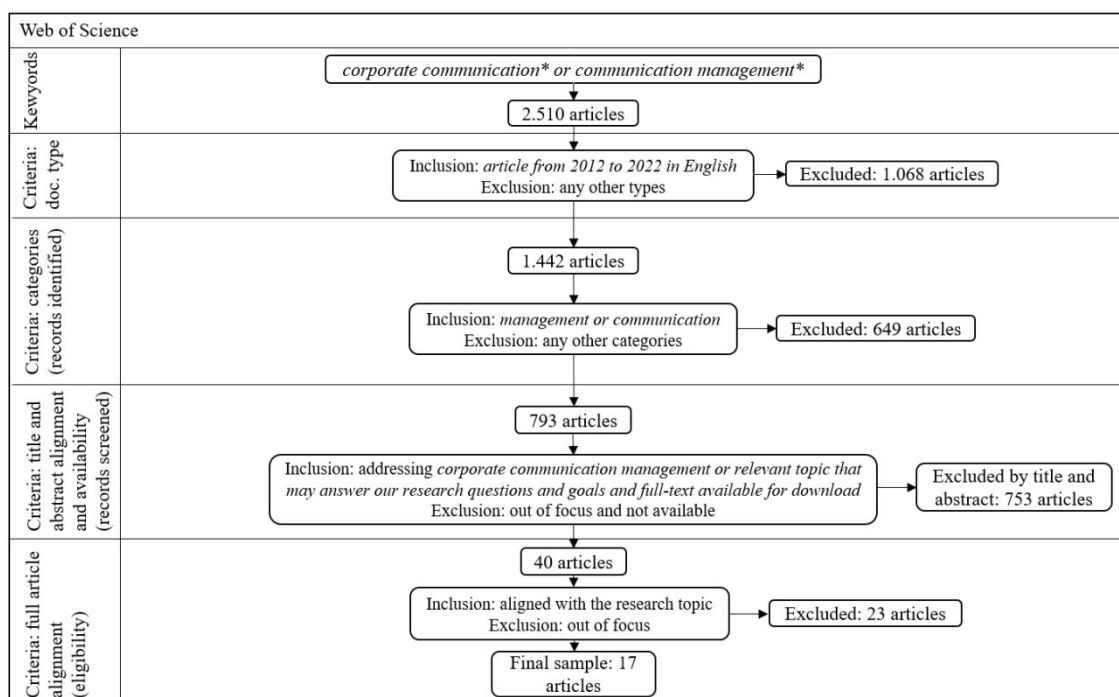


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews.

### 2.1 Data sources and search strategies

We systematically searched the electronic database Web of Science (WoS) between the years 2012 and 2022 and identified peer-reviewed studies with articles written in English. **Web of Science is widely recognized as one of the leading platforms for accessing high-quality research across various disciplines (Wang and Waltman, 2016). This prominence is underscored by its reputation as one of the most prominent bibliographic databases. Additionally, according to citation-based criteria established by Wang and Waltman (2016), Web of Science significantly outperforms Scopus in the accuracy of its journal classification system. Therefore, using Web of Science as the sole source for the article is considered appropriate.**

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3 Considering the significant evolution in CCM, driven by the rise of social media and the  
4 importance of transparency in the last decade, a literature search within the timeframe  
5 from 2010 to 2022 was deemed appropriate. An objective search strategy has been  
6 adopted and literature has been searched with keywords related to the theme. The terms  
7 “corporate communication” OR “communication management” have been used as  
8 keywords for the topic (WoS). An initial search was performed with the help of these  
9 keywords. Well-defined delimiting boundaries were used to screen the literature. Figure  
10 1 provides data on our search strategy and the boundaries for literature screening.  
11  
12

### 13 *2.2 Selection of studies*

14  
15 Titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine paper eligibility to be included in the  
16 study and the full text of potentially relevant studies was reviewed for final inclusion. In  
17 Figure 1, the set of inclusion and exclusion criteria used in our literature search on WoS  
18 is presented.  
19

### 20 *2.3 Data extraction process and quality assessment*

21  
22 The titles and abstracts of the articles returned by the search were read to identify only  
23 those that were relevant to the research questions and goals. Of the 793 articles returned,  
24 we selected 40. In this phase, the reason for exclusion of these studies was thematic  
25 inadequacy in relation to our issue of study.  
26

### 27 *2.4 Eligibility criteria*

28  
29 The researchers proceeded to read the 40 articles identified after the screening and analyze  
30 them based on the selection criteria established according to the research questions. The  
31 results were organized in an Excel.  
32

### 33 *2.5 Constitution of the corpus of analysis*

34  
35 The search yielded a total of 793 articles. After applying the exclusion criteria in Figure  
36 1, this number was narrowed to a total of 17 articles relevant to this systematic review of  
37 literature. **The remaining 776 articles were excluded because they did not address  
38 CCM or refer to related topics that could be considered dimensions of CCM.  
39 Specifically, some studies were excluded because they did not pertain to CCM, while  
40 others were omitted for failing to mention any relevant CCM dimensions. Notably,  
41 many of these articles focused on corporate social responsibility, public relations,  
42 and social media. As a result, these excluded articles did not provide alternative  
43 perspectives on CCM in different contexts.**  
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## 50 **3. Description and classification of literature**

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52 All 17 research papers selected through SLR are analyzed and classified by year of  
53 publication, journal of publication, country of publication, and methodology used. This  
54 classification is performed in order to understand the trends and issues in the literature  
55 that are relevant to the dimensionality of CCM.  
56

### 57 *3.1 Analysis by year of publication*

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59 The analysis by year of publication reveals a consistent pattern of selected articles being  
60 published regularly between 2012 and 2022. However, it is worth mentioning that

publication has decreased after 2018, especially in the year 2020 (Figure 2). Figure 2 also illustrates that the highest number of papers were published in the years 2014 and 2017.

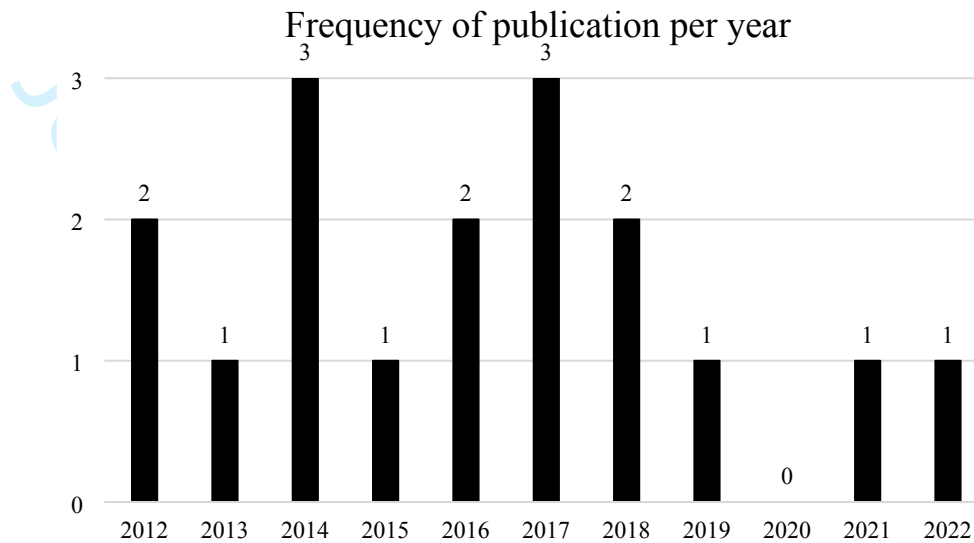


Figure 2. Frequency of publication per year.

### 3.2 Analysis by journal of publication

The analysis reveals that the most involved journals in the discussion of literature about the dimensionality of CCM were *Journal of Communication Management*, *Corporate Communications*, and *The Bottom Line*. A total of 8 journals contained the selected publications. Figure 3 presents these journals with one and more than one article published on the dimensionality of CCM.

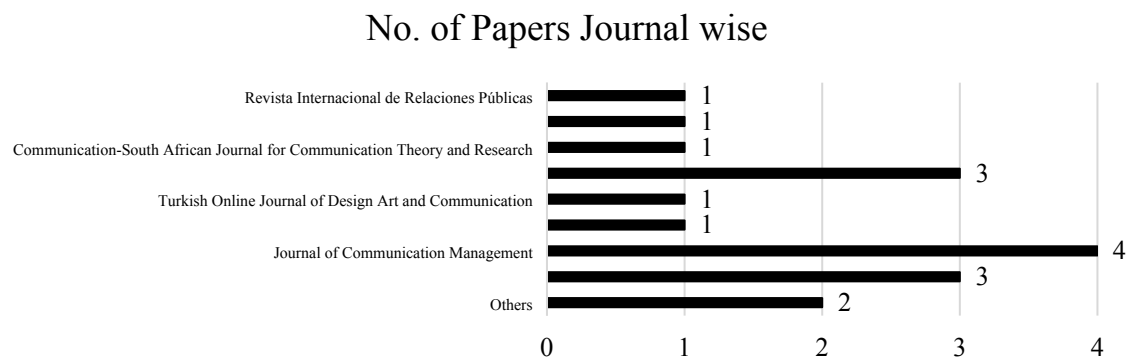


Figure 3. Journal-wise publication of research papers.



### 3.3 Analysis by country studied

The country-based analysis shows the countries from which the samples were selected in the articles reviewed for this research. Research on the dimensionality of CCM predominantly involves samples from European countries. Related to this, researchers mainly focus on a single-country setting for their study. Indeed, a small number of articles report on cross-country settings (e.g., Elving *et al.*, 2012; Mohamad *et al.*, 2014, 2018; Siano *et al.*, 2017; Zerfass and Viertmann, 2017). Mohamad *et al.* (2019) extend their focus to Asia, while Zerfass and Volk (2018) concentrate on Germany. This limited scope indicates a lack of systematic literature to compare findings across different contexts and cultures.

Additionally, articles that report on cross-country settings tend to identify dimensions that are most similar within the same regional distribution. Specifically, articles categorized as “global” exhibit similar dimensions. In this context, studies conducted in Asia align most closely with global findings, whereas European studies show the greatest variation in dimensions. Furthermore, articles based on cross-country settings often rely on existing literature, while those focused on single-country settings typically draw on results obtained directly from practitioners.

Regarding the studies from America, it is notable that they are confined to Anglo-America, likely due to the English-language filter. Interestingly, none of the American articles mention stakeholders. A discernible trend has emerged, with European and American research focusing on different aspects of the field. European studies have predominantly emphasized the value and importance of corporate communication management and its practitioners, while research in America has focused more on the profession itself and the skills and competencies required.

In conclusion, distinct differences in perspectives are evident across continents, particularly between Europe, America, and the global classification. The list of countries with one or more research articles is presented in Table I.

Table I. Country-wise distribution of research papers.

Table II. Database search protocol for research paper selection.

## 4. Citation analysis

We examine the cited references of the selected research papers to see the quality of the articles. We have used the citation information provided by Web of Science (WoS) for citation analysis.

The 17 articles had 918 cited references. The average number of references per article was 54 citations. The number of citations for each article is shown in Table III. Mohamad *et al.* (2018) was the most-cited article with 159 citations, followed by Mohamad *et al.* (2019) and Zerfass and Volk (2018).

Table III. List of citations of selected research papers.



## 5. Content analysis

### 5.1 Identified relevant CCM dimensions

In literature, CCM has been studied into three distinct yet interconnected approaches: skills-based, strategic management and functional.

Regarding the first of the approaches, the skills-based approach includes competences addressed by Tench and Moreno (2015), referring to counselling, organizing, managing, performing, analyzing, and supporting vision and standards, ethics etc., all part of a Communication Role Matrix. Likewise, roles of the senior communicator have referred to advocate for the business and stakeholders, which encapsulates the activities undertaken by CCM professionals across dimensions (Killingsworth and Flynn, 2016).

Continuing with the strategic management approach, communication's contributions include conveying the corporate strategy and positioning to key stakeholders as well as multiplying the corporate strategy and positioning to reach all stakeholders and interested publics, among others (Zerfass and Volk, 2018). Furthermore, components of strategic communication have referred to constituting, alligning, visioning and energizing (Invernizzi *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, major values that can be achieved by corporate communication encompass publicity, customer preferences, employee commitment, relationships, trust, legitimacy, among others (Zerfass and Viertmann, 2017).

To finish, within the framework of Corporate Communication Management (CCM), the functional approach—predominantly cited—refers to distinct areas of responsibility or activities that contribute to comprehensive communication strategies. CCM's activities encompass a range of areas including advertising, public relations, social relations, internal communication, corporate strategy, and crisis communication, among others (Fyke *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, specific tasks such as public affairs have been classified as a task by Elving *et al.* (2012); however, this concept was subsequently redefined as a dimension by Mohamad *et al.* (2014). This functional approach has been used by other authors, who mention stakeholder relationships and communication areas to refer to general public relations, employee relations, partner relations, labor relations, customer relations, government relations, and community and pressure group relations (Siano *et al.*, 2017), similar to what Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019) propose. Similarly, Slabbert and Barker (2014) identify essential corporate communication functions for organization-stakeholder relationship (OSR) building, including environmental scanning and evaluation, issues management, reputation management, and knowledge sharing enabled by a culture of knowledge. Furthermore, Ngai and Ng and Loureiro and Loureiro (2013; 2021) employ the term “areas” to refer to distinct domains of communication activity, such as media, media relations, and internal communication, which Mohamad *et al.* (2014) have also termed dimensions. Additional areas identified include corporate image, events and protocol, institutional communication and corporate responsibility (Loureiro and Loureiro, 2021), corporate branding, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Ngai and Ng, 2013).

In addition, the most comprehensive studies on the dimensionality of CCM following a functional approach have been conducted by Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019). In this regard, they identified different dimensions: corporate advertising, public affairs, public relations, media relations, investor relations, employee communication (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014), information and internal communication, information and data (Mohamad *et al.*, 2018) and corporate affairs (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019). The research conducted by Mohamad

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2  
3 *et al.* (2014) exhibits a high degree of cohesion. However, the dimension of “corporate  
4 advertising” lacks a discernible stakeholder focus, whereas dimensions such as “public  
5 affairs” and “public relations” suffer from ambiguities surrounding their operational  
6 domains. Furthermore, there is a conspicuous absence of dimensions devoted, for  
7 instance, to partner and supplier relations, a deviation from the strategic alignment with  
8 specific stakeholders.  
9



10  
11  
12 Table IV. Approaches to studying CCM in literature.  
13  
14

### 15 16 5.2 CCM dimensions specifically used depending on the stakeholder

17 An underexplored aspect of the analyzed articles is the limited treatment of stakeholder  
18 theory. The vast majority do not mention stakeholders, and in the rare cases where  
19 stakeholders are addressed, they are not discussed. However, Corporate Communication  
20 Management (CCM) plays a crucial role in shaping an organization's reputation and  
21 fostering successful relationships with its stakeholders (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019). A one-  
22 size-fits-all approach to communication is ineffective in today's diverse stakeholder  
23 landscape. To achieve optimal communication outcomes, companies must adopt a  
24 strategic approach, utilizing different dimensions of CCM tailored to specific stakeholder  
25 groups.  
26  
27

28 Although limited in number, some dimensions are associated with certain stakeholders.  
29 This is the case with the following dimensions: corporate advertising (Elving *et al.*, 2012;  
30 Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; 2018; 2019), public relations (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; 2018; 2019),  
31 media relations (Elving *et al.*, 2012; Gorkemli and Çetinkaya, 2017; Grandien and  
32 Johansson, 2012; Loureiro and Loureiro, 2021; Mohamad *et al.*, 2019; Mohamad *et al.*,  
33 2018; Siano *et al.*, 2017), investor relations (Gorkemli and Çetinkaya, 2017; Mohamad *et al.*,  
34 2014; 2018; 2019; Siano *et al.*, 2017), and employee communications (Mohamad *et al.*,  
35 2014). In subsequent studies, Mohamad *et al.* (2018; 2019) maintained this  
36 perspective, noting that corporate advertising targets both internal and external  
37 stakeholders without further specification.  
38  
39

40 According to Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019), corporate advertising and public  
41 relations address both internal stakeholders (i.e., employees) and external stakeholders  
42 (i.e., media, customers, and government). In the case of corporate advertising, eventually,  
43 Mohamad *et al.* (2018; 2019) maintained the same perspective, noting that this dimension  
44 addresses internal and external stakeholders, although they did not specify them further.  
45  
46

47 While media is the most frequently emphasized stakeholder group in the context of media  
48 relations, several scholars acknowledge a broader stakeholder landscape. Mohamad *et al.*  
49 (2018; 2019) and Elving *et al.* (2012) extend this stakeholder consideration to include  
50 both external and internal audiences, along with the addition of speech person press  
51 contacts. A similar situation occurs with investor relations: while earlier studies by Siano  
52 *et al.* (2017), Gorkemli and Çetinkaya (2017), and Mohamad *et al.* (2019) primarily focus  
53 on investors as the key stakeholder group, other works by Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018)  
54 broaden this perspective to encompass both external and internal stakeholders. In their  
55 exploration of employee communication, Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019) specifically  
56 identify employees as a crucial internal stakeholder group, using terms like staff, union  
57 leaders, or non-executive employees.  
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3 Finally, according to the interviews conducted by Mohamad *et al.* (2019) with  
4 practitioners, the vast majority preferred to categorize CCM into activities rather than  
5 stakeholder groups. On the contrary, each time a dimension is discussed, it is essential to  
6 consider the specific stakeholder group being addressed because focusing solely on what  
7 is done risks overlooking the most crucial aspect: the audience. Indeed, Shelby (1993)  
8 asserts that organizational communications primarily target corporate audiences, which  
9 include shareholders, financial journalists, investment analysts, regulators, and  
10 legislators. In communication, the audience is paramount; its absence renders the  
11 communication null, thereby hindering the implementation of specific actions intended  
12 to achieve predetermined objectives.  
13  
14

### 15 16 17 5.3 Measuring CCM

18 Effective Corporate Communication Management (CCM) hinges on measuring the  
19 effectiveness of communication efforts across different dimensions. While the reviewed  
20 research predominantly utilized a qualitative approach, focusing on practitioners' roles  
21 and activities (Elving *et al.*, 2012; Fyke *et al.*, 2022; Loureiro and Loureiro, 2021;  
22 Mohamad *et al.*, 2019; Ngai and Ng, 2013; Siano *et al.*, 2017; Slabbert and Barker, 2014),  
23 some studies employed quantitative methods. Invernizzi *et al.* (2018) measured the  
24 institutionalization of the communication through four indicators, while Tench and  
25 Moreno (2015) developed a survey to assess communication professionals' competencies.  
26 This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to CCM measurement, combining  
27 qualitative insights with quantitative data to gain a deeper understanding of  
28 communication effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This is consistent with  
29 Mohamad *et al.*'s (2019) work, which highlights the critical gap in the development of  
30 standardized measurement scales for CCM dimensions.  
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### 34 35 36 5.4 The conceptualization of CCM

37 Effective Corporate Communication Management (CCM) goes beyond simply sending  
38 messages. It requires a strategic approach that involves planning, executing, and  
39 evaluating communication efforts (Tench and Moreno, 2015). Two key aspects of  
40 successful CCM are conceptualization and measurement. CCM encompasses various  
41 areas of communication practice within an organization. These areas, often referred to as  
42 "dimensions," help categorize communication activities based on their target audience or  
43 focus. Several dimensions play a key role in CCM.  
44

45 The conceptualization of CCM is multifaceted and has evolved over time. It represents a  
46 complex system, interacting with other communication systems and the external  
47 environment, leading to interdependencies between different communication  
48 components. Organizations adopt a hybrid approach that combines different perspectives.  
49 Further, the conceptualization of CCM is influenced by several factors, such as cultural  
50 norms or industry context. The most appropriate conceptualization of CCM depends on  
51 the specific needs and goals of an organization. This means that the most effective CCM  
52 framework is contingent upon the specific needs and goals of an organization. This  
53 contingent approach is further influenced by a multitude of contextual variables,  
54 including cultural norms and industry context.  
55

56 Over time, the literature on CCM has delineated an evolving set of dimensions. Varey's  
57 (1997) seminal work, based on a survey of UK communication professionals, identified  
58 core dimensions encompassing public relations, personnel, employee communications,  
59  
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3 quality management, and marketing. Goodman (2000) expanded this framework to  
4 include a range of potential dimensions: “public relations, investor relations, employee  
5 relations, community relations, media relations, labor relations, government relations,  
6 technical communication, training and employee development, marketing  
7 communication, management communication” and even “philanthropic activity, crisis  
8 and emergency communication, and advertising” (p. 1). However, Mihai (2017) later  
9 proposed a more streamlined approach, arguing that CCM’s dimensions or functions  
10 entailed handling public relations, corporate advertising, internal communication, and  
11 shareholder’s interaction with the internal and external public. Reflecting this ongoing  
12 evolution, recently, Mohamad *et al.*, (2019) narrowed down six major dimensions of  
13 CCM: corporate advertising, public affairs, public relations, media relations,  
14 investor/financial relations, and employee communication.  
15  
16

17  
18 A comprehensive review of the relevant literature identified over 70 terms closely related  
19 to CCM dimensions. The most frequently cited dimensions (in descending order) include  
20 media relations, dimensions related to strategy (writing communication plans, corporate  
21 strategy, strategy and execution, communication strategy), corporate advertising, public  
22 relations, investor relations, employee communication, public affairs, and internal  
23 communication.  
24

25 Corporate Communication Management (CCM) is comprised of a set of dimensions that  
26 contribute to efficient and effective communications. A critical aspect of successful CCM  
27 involves defining the purpose and the target audience for each dimension, considering the  
28 key stakeholders with whom organizations interact. By adopting a comprehensive and  
29 adaptable approach, a company can gain valuable insights to optimize communication  
30 practices and contribute to organizational success.  
31

32 This research builds upon a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature, focusing on  
33 dimensions consistently identified across various studies, even if presented with different  
34 terminology. Additionally, it proposes the inclusion of an additional dimension:  
35 “potential customer relations”. This proposed framework draws upon the dimensionality  
36 identified by Mohamad *et al.* (2019) while incorporating this novel dimension. Below are  
37 the seven main dimensions of CCM:  
38

#### 39 *Public relations*

40  
41 This dimension refers to all activities, relationships, and issues related to the general  
42 public. Within this context, we have identified several terms that either refer to this  
43 dimension or share a similar focus. We propose naming this dimension “public relations”,  
44 and the terms we suggest that should fall under this category include: public affairs  
45 management, corporate affairs, general public relations, corporate advertising,  
46 advertising, marketing communication, government relations, community relations, and  
47 community and pressure groups relations. This dimension aligns with concepts explored  
48 by various scholars, such as "general public relations" (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; 2018;  
49 2019; Siano *et al.*, 2017) "public relations stuff" (Fyke *et al.*, 2022), and "public affairs"  
50 (Elving *et al.*, 2012). A range of potential metrics have been proposed for assessment of  
51 the communication effectiveness within this dimension, focusing on the number of media  
52 mentions, the tone and sentiment of media coverage (assessing whether it is positive,  
53 negative, or neutral), the reach and engagement of PR messages on social media  
54 platforms, brand reputation, brand awareness, trust, credibility, loyalty among  
55 stakeholders, and attendance and media coverage of PR events.  
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57

#### 58 *Media relations*

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3 Media relations encompass all activities, relationships, and issues related to the media.  
4 We propose that all terms identified, either referring to this dimension or having a similar  
5 focus, should be categorized as media relations. These terms include media relations,  
6 social relations, and communication with the media. This dimension aligns with what is  
7 proposed by Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019), Fyke *et al.* (2022), Gorkemli and  
8 Çetinkaya (2017), Siano *et al.* (2017), Loureiro and Loureiro (2021) as “communication  
9 with the media”, Ngai and Ng (2013), and Grandien and Johansson (2012). A  
10 comprehensive array of metrics has been proposed for assessing the communication  
11 effectiveness within this dimension: the number of media impressions, mentions,  
12 engagement, share of voice, and tone of coverage.  
13  
14

#### 15 *Investor relations*

16  
17 This dimension includes all activities, relationships, and issues related to investors. We  
18 recommend categorizing all the terms identified as referring to this dimension or naming  
19 it similarly as investor relations. These terms include corporate advertising, advertising,  
20 marketing communication, and financial communication. This dimension is consistent  
21 with what is proposed by Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019), Gorkemli and Çetinkaya  
22 (2017), Siano *et al.* (2017), and Sinha and Bhatia (2016). Metrics have been proposed to  
23 assess the communication effectiveness within this dimension: the share price  
24 performance, investor perception, satisfaction and confidence in the organization, number  
25 of meetings and calls with investors, investor sentiment, attendance and feedback from  
26 investors at events organized by the company, and shareholder engagement.  
27  
28

#### 29 *Employee relations*

30  
31 Employee relations include all activities, relationships and issues related to employees.  
32 We propose that the terms referring to this dimension should be categorized as employee  
33 relations. Within this category, we find the following terms: internal communication stuff,  
34 internal communication, and labor relations. This dimension is consistent with what is  
35 proposed by Mohamad *et al.* (2014; 2018; 2019) and Grandien and Johansson (2012) as  
36 “employee communication”, Elving *et al.* (2012) as “evaluation communication of  
37 management and employees”, Fyke *et al.* (2022) as “internal communication stuff”,  
38 Gorkemli and Çetinkaya (2017) as “communication with external and internal  
39 stakeholders” and Siano *et al.* (2017), Ngai and Ng (2013), Sinha and Bhatia (2016), and  
40 Loureiro and Loureiro (2021) as “internal communication”. A range of potential metrics  
41 have been proposed for assessment of the communication effectiveness within this  
42 dimension, focusing on the employee satisfaction and engagement surveys, employee  
43 turnover rate, and absenteeism rates.  
44  
45

#### 46 *Potential employee relations*

47  
48 The dimension potential employee relation encompasses all activities, relationships, and  
49 issues related to potential employees and hiring processes. Within this dimension, we  
50 propose including the following terms: corporate advertising, advertising and marketing  
51 communication. While the reviewed literature lacks explicit mention of a dimension  
52 focused on potential employees communication, it is clear that cultivating relationship  
53 with this relations with potential employees need to be addressed differently, using a  
54 specific communications strategy. In fact, this dimension is separated from employee  
55 relations, as both have been distinguished in disciplines as employer branding (Ambler  
56 and Barrow, 1996). We propose that this dimension can be measured with employer brand  
57 perception and offer acceptance rates.  
58  
59

#### 60 *Partner and supplier relations*

This dimension refers to all activities, relationships, and issues related to partners and suppliers. We propose categorizing all terms that either directly refer to this category or share a similar focus as partner and supplier relations. These terms include corporate advertising, advertising, marketing communication, partner relations and supplier and distributor relations. This dimension is in accordance with what is proposed by Siano *et al.* (2017) as “partner relations”. We propose to measure this dimension with vendor performance ratings, relationship satisfaction surveys, the level of innovation and collaboration between the organization and its partners or suppliers, and long-term value creation.

#### *Customer relations*

Customer relations cover all activities, relationships, and issues related to customers. Within this category, we suggest labeling all terms identified in the literature that either directly refer to this dimension or share a similar focus as customer relations. These terms include customer relations, corporate advertising, advertising, and marketing communication. The conceptualization of this dimension finds support in the work of Siano *et al.* (2017). Potential metrics have been proposed for the assessment of the communication effectiveness within this dimension, focusing on the Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Retention Rate, Customer Churn Rate, Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), customer engagement and service metrics, customer feedback and surveys, customer complaint resolution time, and customer referral rate.

Henceforth, the aforementioned dimensions comprehensively encompass all activities entailed in corporate communication management, thereby addressing the most pivotal stakeholders of enterprises. Each company will exhibit unique circumstances, necessitating a focus on specific stakeholder groups, and thereby requiring a concentration on particular dimensions over others. However, the array of dimensions for addressing corporate communication, as delineated in Table V, facilitates reaching distinct stakeholder groups more effectively through each dimension. Thus, the illustration in this figure delineates how the dimensions of corporate communication are stratified based on stakeholder groups, entailing specific actions within each dimension.

Table V. The proposed model of the CCM dimensions.

## **6. Findings from literature review**

This systematic literature review has examined previous studies addressing the diversity of perspectives used to describe CCM in scientific literature. When referring to the components of CCM, despite the growing attention and importance placed on CCM dimensions, there is a lack of uniformity in terminology within scientific research. Indeed, different authors name the same dimensions differently – “media relations” (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; 2018; 2019), “media relations and social relations” (Fyke *et al.*, 2022) or “communication with the media” (Loureiro and Loureiro, 2021). Therefore, the review highlights the importance of addressing this issue to advance understanding and collaboration in the field.

A key finding is the critical need for standardizing terminology not just related to each of the dimensions but, in general, within the field of CCM. The analyzed studies have

1  
2  
3 demonstrated a wide array of terms used to describe the same concept, the “dimensions”  
4 concept, leading to confusion and misunderstandings in scientific literature. Dimensions  
5 are referred to as “dimensions” (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014; 2018; 2019), “actions” (Fyke *et*  
6 *al.*, 2022), “tasks” (Elving *et al.*, 2012), “stakeholder relationships and communication  
7 areas” (Siano *et al.*, 2017), and “areas” (Ngai and Ng and Loureiro and Loureiro, 2013 &  
8 2021). Consequently, it is paramount that authors and practitioners agree on one term  
9 since the absence of consensus in nomenclature can hinder effective communication  
10 among researchers. For this and to manage it effectively, it is key to conceptualize and  
11 measure dimensions. It is crucial for functions to be associated with stakeholders.

12  
13  
14 Regarding the dimensions themselves, the most repeated dimensions (in order)  
15 throughout the articles have been the following: media relations (mentioned in 10  
16 articles), dimensions related to strategy (writing communication plans, corporate strategy,  
17 strategy and execution, communication strategy), corporate advertising, public relations,  
18 investor relations, employee communication, public affairs, and internal communication  
19 (mentioned in 4 articles).

20  
21 In the past decade, researchers have been focusing on what this discipline encompasses  
22 and on how it can be proven it is worth for a company and its performance (Mohamad *et*  
23 *al.*, 2014). There exists the necessity to clarify and demonstrate the contribution of CCM  
24 to organizational success.

25  
26 It has been noticed that there are some dimensions that are most of the times linked to  
27 certain stakeholders. For instance, employee communication is always linked to  
28 employees. However, according to Mohamad *et al.* (2019), in the professional world,  
29 “most of the practitioners preferred to categorise CCM into activities, rather than groups  
30 of stakeholders” (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019, p. 86). This may imply that when working on  
31 various actions stemming from different dimensions, the focus on the intended recipient  
32 and the rationale behind the action itself may be lost.

33  
34  
35 None of the analyzed articles measured CCM dimensions or proposed metrics for their  
36 measurement. Therefore, the development of CCM dimensions’ measurement scales  
37 remains a major gap in the CCM body of knowledge.

## 40 41 7. Theoretical implications

42 **This study not only offers a comprehensive compilation of publications on the**  
43 **dimensionality of corporate communication management (CCM) and their**  
44 **categorization based on various attributes but also provides valuable insights to**  
45 **researchers and corporate communication practitioners. The primary theoretical**  
46 **contributions of this research lie in the development of an integrative framework for**  
47 **CCM, which enhances the understanding of CCM alongside corporate**  
48 **communication strategies. This study was initiated in response to the ongoing**  
49 **theoretical ambiguity within the field, highlighting the need for greater consensus**  
50 **on specific aspects of CCM (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, the theoretical**  
51 **contribution of this research is underscored by the examination of CCM through a**  
52 **systematic literature review, offering a comprehensive overview of published works**  
53 **and addressing a significant gap in the CCM body of knowledge.**

54  
55  
56 **The findings of this study provide valuable guidance to authors, corporate**  
57 **communication managers, and practitioners by advocating the use of standardized**  
58 **terminology in CCM to minimize confusion and improve communication.**  
59 **Furthermore, the findings facilitate the association of specific CCM dimensions with**  
60



1  
2  
3 particular stakeholders, as certain dimensions, such as employee communication,  
4 are consistently linked to specific groups. Additionally, categorizing CCM according  
5 to stakeholders rather than activities enables practitioners to concentrate on the  
6 intended recipients and underlying rationale. This approach assists practitioners in  
7 tailoring best practices in CCM that are most suitable for their organizations.  
8

9  
10 A limited application of Stakeholder Theory (Donaldson and Preston, 2016) has  
11 been detected in the analyzed articles, indicating that stakeholder theory is an  
12 underexplored area that deserves further investigation to enhance CCM. Although  
13 Stakeholder Theory provides a valuable framework, it is not the only theoretical  
14 lens that can contribute to the progression of CCM. Scholars have emphasized the  
15 necessity for further theoretical development to expand the field (Grandien and  
16 Johansson, 2012). In this context, Institutional Theory (Invernizzi and Romenti,  
17 2009; Tench *et al.*, 2009; Zerfass, 2009) offers a robust foundation for understanding  
18 and analyzing the role of CCM in organizational success (Sandhu, 2009; Grandien  
19 and Johansson, 2012). This theory emphasizes how organizational structures and  
20 practices are shaped by external social and cultural forces, rather than purely by  
21 rational decision-making aimed at maximizing efficiency. For example, Institutional  
22 Theory informs how organizations communicate with various stakeholders based  
23 on institutional norms. Moreover, organizations often adopt communication  
24 practices that are seen as legitimate in their field. Therefore, this theory highlights  
25 the importance of considering broader societal and cultural factors in designing and  
26 implementing communication strategies, moving beyond a purely instrumental view  
27 of communication.  
28

29  
30  
31 The institutionalization of the communication function within organizations has  
32 been linked to that of other corporate functions such as finance, human resources,  
33 and information technology (Swerling and Sen, 2009). The question of whether  
34 communication management as a profession can be regarded as institutionalized has  
35 been a topic of debate (Sandhu, 2009; Valentini, 2009; Grandien and Johansson,  
36 2012). Additionally, the process of institutionalizing communication management  
37 has been conceptualized, with key elements influencing and regulating this process  
38 being explored and defined (Grandien and Johansson, 2012).  
39

40  
41 In addition to Institutional Theory, Social Theory (Ihlen *et al.*, 2009) also provides  
42 significant insights (Grandien and Johansson, 2012), collectively emphasizing the  
43 critical role of communication strategies in managing relationships, navigating  
44 institutional pressures, and shaping perceptions both within and outside the  
45 organization. Despite these advancements, there remains a lack of a comprehensive  
46 theoretical framework for studying the institutionalization of communication  
47 management (Grandien and Johansson, 2012).  
48

## 49 50 51 **8. Practical implications**

52  
53 This study offers several practical implications that are likely to benefit  
54 practitioners in the field of corporate communication management (CCM). We  
55 emphasize these implications to bridge the gap between the academic discipline and  
56 the professional practice in CCM. CCM is recognized as a crucial component of  
57 effective management strategy and a vital function within contemporary  
58 organizations (Goodman, 2000; Yamauchi, 2001; Mihai, 2017), and it plays a  
59 significant role in a company's ability to create and communicate its strategy  
60

(Forman and Argenti, 2005). Previous studies have established a positive correlation between CCM and financial performance (Mohamad *et al.*, 2014), highlighting the importance of advancing knowledge in this area and addressing the challenge of developing CCM best practices, which are of considerable interest to the business community (Mohamad *et al.*, 2019).

Practitioners will find this study valuable for enhancing CCM practices and, consequently, improving their impact on organizational performance. The findings provide practitioners with tools to communicate more effectively with stakeholders and to gain a clearer understanding of the dimensions involved in their practice. Specifically, the study identifies key dimensions such as media relations, strategy-related dimensions, corporate advertising, public relations, investor relations, employee communication, public affairs, and internal communication as the most frequently observed across various organizations. Ultimately, this research highlights the CCM dimensions that practitioners can implement to drive improvements in organizational performance.

## 9. Conclusion

The primary aim of this review was to identify the CCM dimensions used over time, determine whether some dimensions were specifically used depending on the stakeholder approached, analyze how CCM dimensions have been measured, and suggest the conceptualization of the dimensionality of CCM. This has been carried out by adopting the SLR methodology employing the PRISMA framework. A set of 17 research articles published during 2012-2022 about Corporate Communication Management are identified and analyzed. We observed that practitioners need to clarify what this discipline encompasses and that demonstrating the contribution of CCM to organizational success has significantly raised research interest in CCM around the world. Nonetheless, despite this increased attention to CCM, academic literature on CCM is limited. Also, research focused on CCM dimensions is rare. Besides, despite authors mentioning very similar dimensions, non-uniformity in terminology within scientific research has been found. This results in a critical need for standardizing terminology or consensus in nomenclature within the field to prevent hindrances in effective communication among researchers. Regarding stakeholders, there exist some dimensions specifically used depending on the stakeholder; however, most practitioners categorize CCM into activities. Regarding CCM dimensions measurement, it remains a major gap in the CCM body of knowledge. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of terminology standardization in scientific research. It is concluded that the widespread adoption of a common set of terms will facilitate communication among researchers and enhance the reproducibility of studies. In conclusion, this research makes a valuable contribution by identifying key gaps and limitations in the current state of CCM literature. It calls for increased focus on developing a more robust body of literature, emphasizing the importance of standardized terminology and scales for measuring the effectiveness of communication management efforts.

## 10. Limitations and future research

The current review is not without limitations. First, the study focuses primarily on the factors behind the conceptualization of CCM; consequently, many other themes related to CCM are overlooked. Second, the delimitation resulting from the employed method

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3 suggests the possibility of alternative methodologies. This premise constitutes the initial  
4 starting point for the research, and although content analysis is presented as a useful tool  
5 to address this issue, the potential for other methodologies to provide significant  
6 advantages in exploring this phenomenon is acknowledged. The awareness of these  
7 limitations does not detract from the significance of the findings. Rather, it offers a clear  
8 direction for future research, providing an opportunity for improvement and refinement  
9 in this domain. Careful consideration and assimilation of these concerns should be a  
10 priority in any further related studies. To expand the existing body of knowledge on CCM,  
11 there is a need for investigations that employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches  
12 to integrate and connect the concepts analyzed. Such diverse methodological perspectives  
13 would enhance the robustness and depth of the understanding of CCM, thereby  
14 contributing to a more holistic view of its dimensions and applications over time.

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16  
17 **Consequently, the development of CCM measurements should be prioritized**  
18 **following the clarification of the concept and its dimensionality. This will facilitate a**  
19 **deeper understanding of communication effectiveness and help identify areas for**  
20 **improvement. This recommendation aligns with Mohamad *et al.*'s (2019) work,**  
21 **which underscores the significant gap in creating standardized measurement scales**  
22 **for CCM dimensions.**  
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Continent	Country	No. of papers
Global	Global	5
Europe	The Netherlands	1
Europe	Turkey	1
Europe	Germany	1
Europe	Portugal	1
Europe	Italy	1
Europe	42 countries	1
America	USA	1
America	Canada	1
Africa	South Africa	1
Asia	China	1
Asia	India	1
Asia	Malaysia	1
Total		17

Table I. Country-wise distribution of research papers.

77x69mm (150 x 150 DPI)



Database	Scope	Date of search	Time horizon	Total no. of articles	Total no. of selected articles
Elsevier	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	91	2
Emerald	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	268	10
Inderscience	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	7	0
Routledge	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	38	0
Springer	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	40	0
Sage	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	58	1
Others	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	291	4
Total	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	793	17

Table II. Database search protocol for research paper selection.

150x47mm (150 x 150 DPI)

S. No.	Title	Citation
1	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2018)	159
2	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2019)	123
3	Zerfass and Volk (2018)	80
4	Zerfass and Viertmann (2017)	74
5	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2014)	66
6	Sinha and Bhatia (2016)	63
7	Grandien and Johansson (2012)	58
8	Slabbert and Barker (2014)	51
9	Trench and Moreno (2015)	48
10	Elving <i>et al.</i> (2012)	40
11	Loureiro and Loureiro (2021)	33
12	Killingsworth and Flynn (2016)	33
13	Siano <i>et al.</i> (2017)	28
14	Fyke <i>et al.</i> (2022)	22
15	Invernizzi <i>et al.</i> (2014)	22
16	Gorkemli and Çetinkaya (2017)	13
17	Ngai and Ng (2013)	5

Table III. List of citations of selected research papers.

105x84mm (150 x 150 DPI)

Approach	Explanation
Skills based approach	View as a set of roles and competencies.
Strategic approach	View as a strategic tool for managing an organization's reputation, relationships and brand image.
Functional approach	View as set of distinct functions, or activities. It also focuses on building relationships with stakeholders through communication.

Table IV. Approaches to studying CCM in literature.

150x51mm (150 x 150 DPI)

CCM Dimensions	Stakeholder (target)	Activities, actions or functions
Public relations	General public	Public affairs management, corporate affairs, general public relations, corporate advertising, marketing communication, government relations, community relations and pressure groups relations.
Media relations	Media	Media relations and communication with the media.
Investor relations	Investors	Financial communication.
Employee relations	Employees	Internal communication and labor relations.
Partner and supplier relations	Potential employees	Corporate advertising.
Potential employee relations	Partners and suppliers	Corporate advertising.
Customer relations	Customers	Corporate advertising, advertising and marketing communication.

Table V. The proposed model of the CCM dimensions.

150x83mm (150 x 150 DPI)

Continent	Country	No. of papers
Global	Global	5
Europe	The Netherlands	1
Europe	Turkey	1
Europe	Germany	1
Europe	Portugal	1
Europe	Italy	1
Europe	42 countries	1
America	USA	1
America	Canada	1
Africa	South Africa	1
Asia	China	1
Asia	India	1
Asia	Malaysia	1
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Inderscience	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	7	0
Routledge	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	38	0
Springer	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	40	0
Sage	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	58	1
Others	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	291	4
Total	Title/abstract/keywords	June 4, 2023	2012-2022	793	17

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5	Mohamad <i>et al.</i> (2014)	66
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7	Grandien and Johansson (2012)	58
8	Slabbert and Barker (2014)	51
9	Trench and Moreno (2015)	48
10	Elving <i>et al.</i> (2012)	40
11	Loureiro and Loureiro (2021)	33
12	Killingsworth and Flynn (2016)	33
13	Siano <i>et al.</i> (2017)	28
14	Fyke <i>et al.</i> (2022)	22
15	Invernizzi <i>et al.</i> (2014)	22
16	Gorkemli and Çetinkaya (2017)	13
17	Ngai and Ng (2013)	5

Table III. List of citations of selected research paper.

Approach	Explanation
Skills based approach	View as a set of roles and competencies.
Strategic approach	View as a strategic tool for managing an organization's reputation, relationships and brand image.
Functional approach	View as set of distinct functions, or activities. It also focuses on building relationships with stakeholders through communication.

Table IV. Approaches to studying CCM in literature.

CCM Dimensions	Stakeholder (target)	Activities, actions or functions
Public relations	General public	Public affairs management, corporate affairs, general public relations, corporate advertising, marketing communication, government relations, community relations and pressure groups relations.
Media relations	Media	Media relations and communication with the media.
Investor relations	Investors	Financial communication.
Employee relations	Employees	Internal communication and labor relations.
Partner and supplier relations	Potential employees	Corporate advertising.
Potential employee relations	Partners and suppliers	Corporate advertising.
Customer relations	Customers	Corporate advertising, advertising and marketing communication.

Table V. The proposed model of the CCM dimensions.



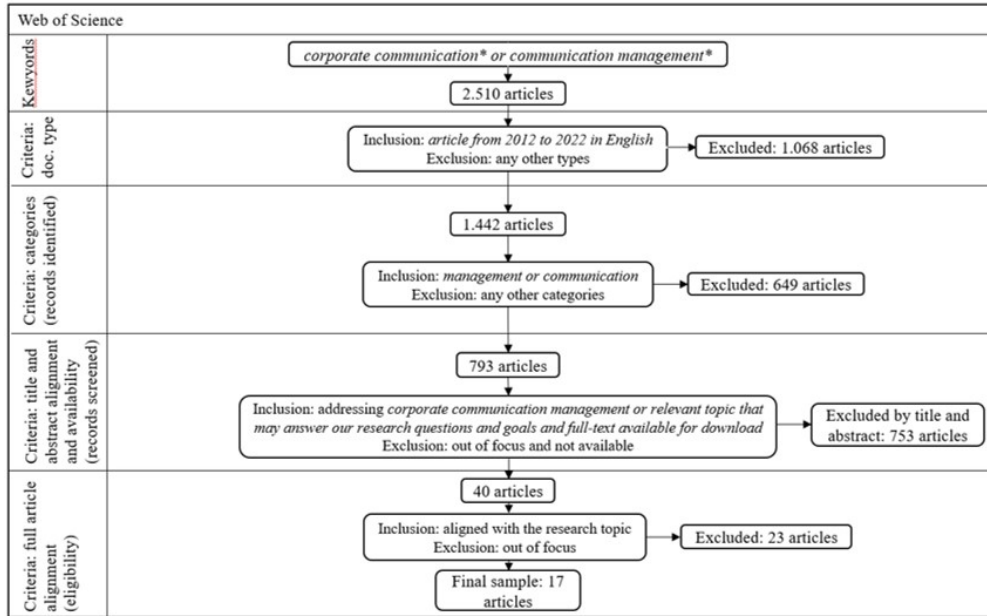
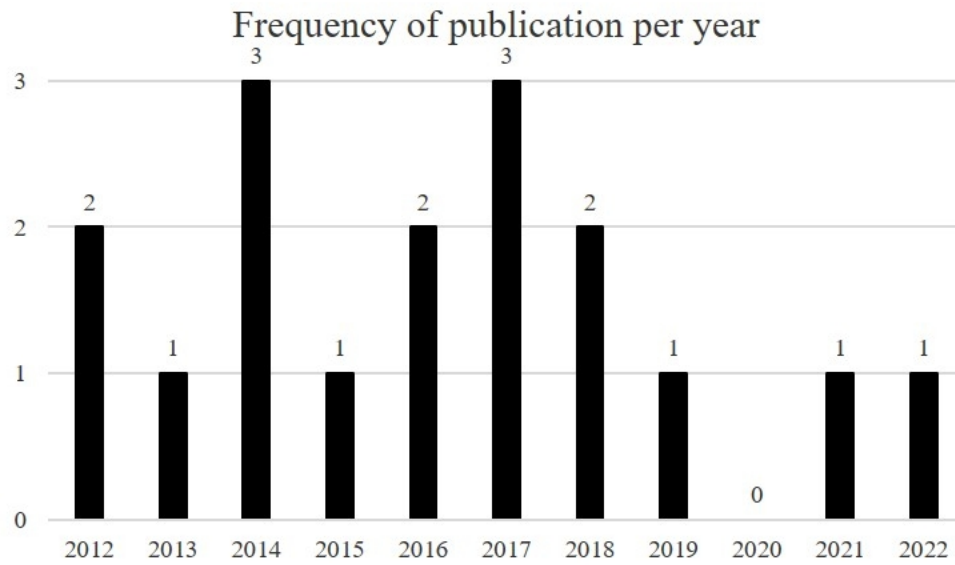


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews.

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Figure 2. Frequency of publication per year.

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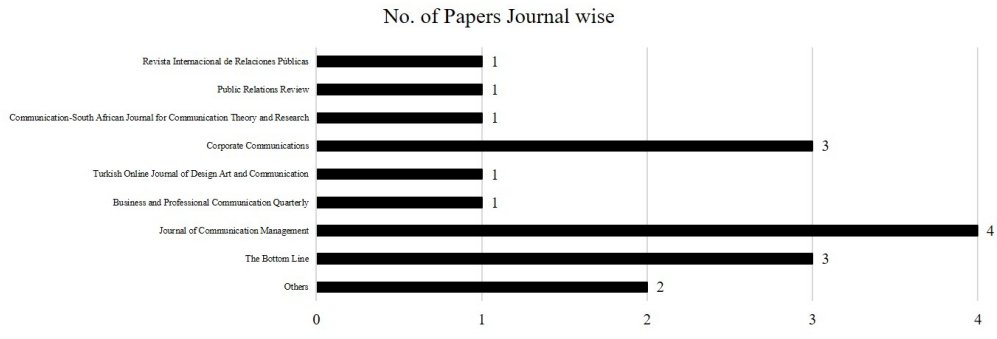


Figure 3. Journal-wise publication of research papers.

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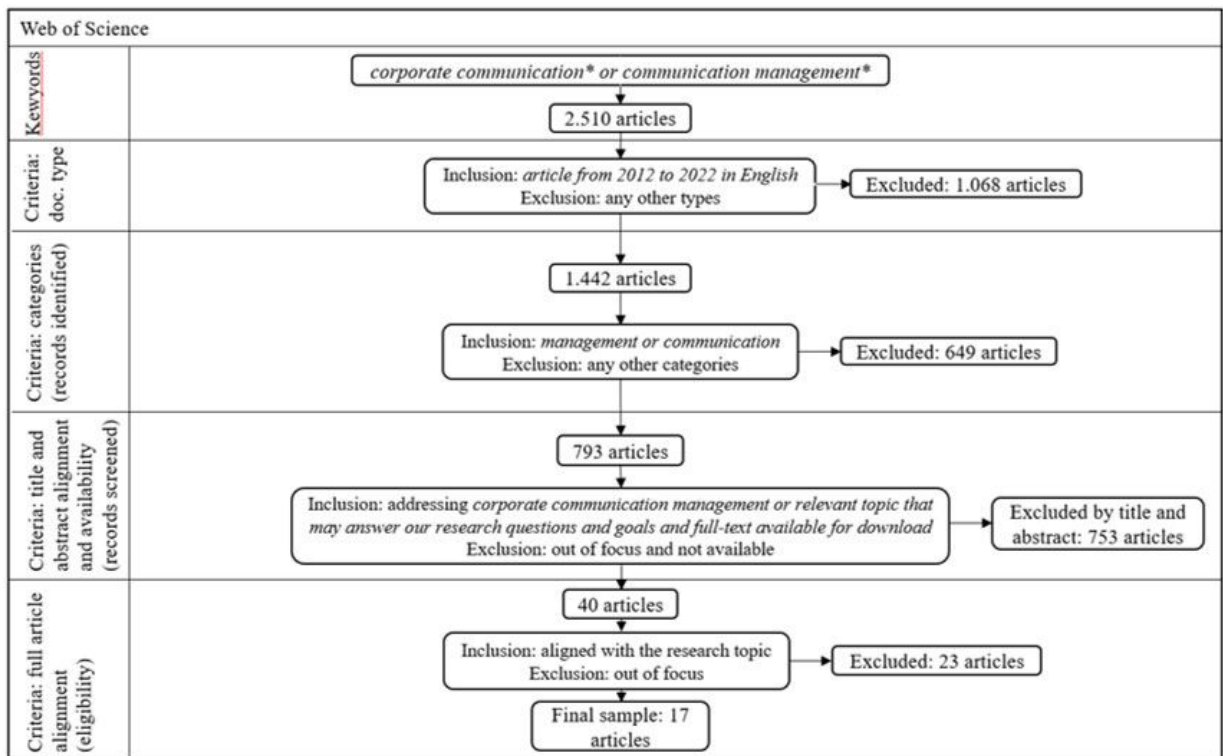


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews.

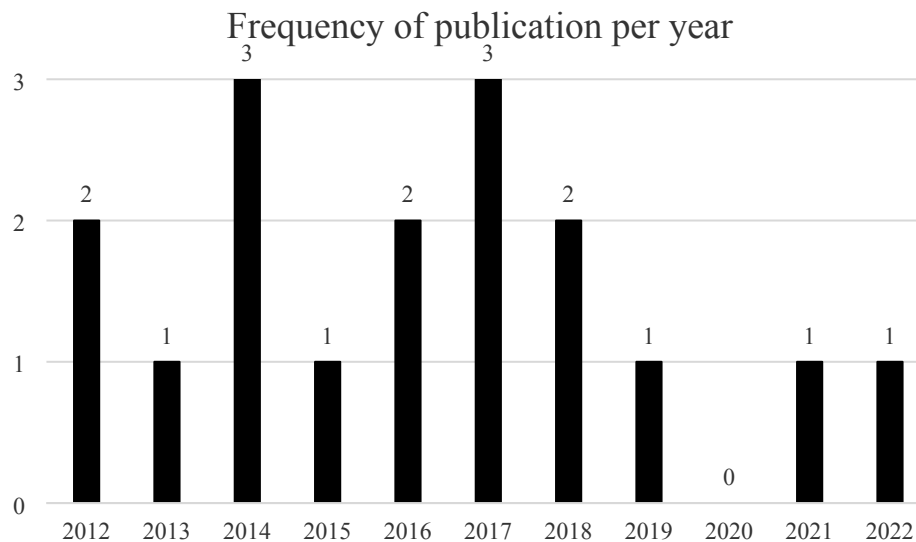


Figure 2. Frequency of publication per year.

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### No. of Papers Journal wise

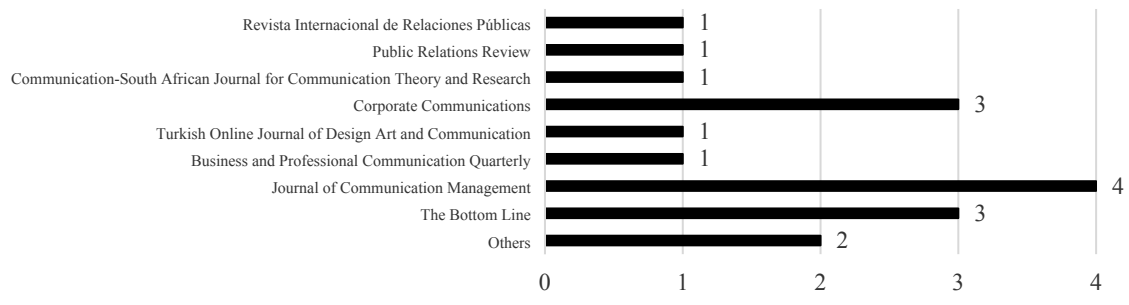


Figure 3. Journal wise publication of research papers.

Journal of Management History